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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Friday, December 30, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "A New Years' Eve Supper." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics.

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A guilty conscience may keep you awake at night. But the food you eat at bedtime can cause just as many sleepless hours. Your sins may bring on dreadful dreams and nightmares. But so may that Welsh rabbit you ate at twelve p.m. or that big platter of fried eggs and ham. Midnight dinners may be the jolliest of affairs, but unless you're careful not to overeat, you're in danger of spending the rest of the night with regrets for company. You see, midnight feasts generally mean just a big extra meal that you don't need and that your digestion may not be prepared to care for.

So if you're having friends and relatives in on New Years' Eve to see 1932 go out and 1933 come in, better be very careful about the food you serve them. One thing is sure. On a cold winter's night like this the chief item on the bill of fare ought to be something hot to drink with plenty of flavor, something that isn't too heavy or rich and that won't cause any qualms of digestion. No one of your guests who has had his evening meal at home will need nourishing food to eat. He'll just want something for warmth and cheer and some extra little items to nibble on as he passes the hours--little items like crisp celery, olives, simple candies, nuts and raisins.

For the main item of refreshment the Menu Specialist suggests a great big bowl of steaming oyster stew served with crackers, freshly crisped in the oven. Let your friends gather around the crackling fire as soon as they arrive. Maybe they'll enjoy having some dishes of celery, olives, nuts or raisins about in convenient places for them to eat when they feel like it as the hours go by. Then, along about midnight, bring in that steaming bowl of oyster stew with its delicious odor. You can make it look extra gay by sprinkling bright red paprika and chopped parsley over the top the last minute before serving. Bring in the stew and dip it out into smaller individual bowls for each guest right there in front of the fire. You'll need to heat these bowls in the warming oven and have plates to serve them on. A tray for each guest is convenient also and prevents accidents. Have some hot, crisp crackers to serve with it. One important thing to remember about oyster stew is that you can't let it stand long without making the oysters tough and perhaps separating the soup itself slightly and spoiling both the taste and the appearance. But you can have all the ingredients and utensils ready and then go out and put the stew together a few minutes before serving. Oysters can be delicious and tender or tough and unattractive, depending on how you treat them. Long cooking or cooking at high heat will toughen them. Cook them only until the edges curl, not a moment longer. But here's the recipe for oyster stew. That will tell you just how to make it. This recipe will make enough for five or six people. If you are expecting a large group on New Years' Eve better double the proportions. Seven ingredients:

1 quart of milk
1 quart of oysters, or canned oysters
4 tablespoons of melted butter
2 tablespoons of flour
Salt
Pepper, and
Chopped parsley

I'll repeat that list.(Repeat.)

Heat the milk in a double boiler. Strain the oysters from their liquor and pick out any small pieces of shell that may be clinging to them. Now heat the oyster liquor slightly and remove the scum which rises to the top. Blend the fat and flour and stir into the milk until it is thickened. Add the oysters and the liquor and cook for 5 or 10 minutes, or until the edges of the oysters begin to curl. Not a bit longer. Now season to taste with salt and pepper.

Can you prepare the oyster stew and keep it hot in the double boiler? Not unless you want the oysters to be tough instead of tender. That's why you need to prepare this stew just before serving.

Why is the double boiler the best utensil to use in making oyster stew? Because by cooking the milk and the oysters this way over hot water you wont be in danger of too much heat. Both the milk, the oysters and the oyster liquor needs to be kept at simmering point, not boiling point. But be sure you serve the stew straight from the stove, while it's still piping hot.

Some people make their stew by cutting up oysters. That gives more flavor to the mixture. But here again avoid long cooking or standing.

By the way, while we're talking about oysters, the Recipe Lady tells me that when you make creamed oysters you want to be sure that the oysters are heated through before you combine them with the thick cream sauce. Otherwise the hot sauce may draw out so much liquid that the sauce will become too thin and the oysters less tender and juicy.

By the way, several different kinds of crackers are good with oystew stew, crisp saltines, either square or long, little wafer-thin round crackers, or even thin slices of bread toasted in the oven.

Monday: "Your Diet in Winter."

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